THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840.]

"*Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the will of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*"—I SAM. 15: 22.

No. 18, Vol. LXVII. Thursday, May 4, 1905. Price One Penny.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH'S OPENING ADDRESS

AT THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH, HELD IN SALT LAKE CITY, APRIL 6, 1905.

MY Brethren and Sisters:—It is certainly a great satisfaction and pleasure to me to see this large assembly of Latter-day Saints gathered here on the opening day of our seventy-fifth annual conference. I am pleased to see you and meet with you; and with the blessings of the Lord and the guiding influence of His Holy Spirit, I trust that I shall also be pleased in the opportunity afforded me at this moment of speaking to you for a short time. I feel exceedingly dependent upon the promptings of the Spirit to my mind. I stand before you without premeditation or forethought as to what I shall say.

I believe that I can say to you with all confidence that so far as my knowledge extends, the Latter-day Saints throughout this intermountain region and the adjoining country, and so far as I know throughout the world, are in excellent spiritual condition. I believe that the Latter-day Saints enjoy as much to-day of that thorough spirit of their religion as they ever have enjoyed. I believe there is as much union among our people throughout the length and breadth of the land as has ever existed in the Church. I think I can confidently say that there are as few local difficulties and troubles among the people coming before the Church courts, before the Bishops and before the High Councils, as I have ever known before within the scope of my remembrance and knowledge. We are perhaps never free entirely from little misunderstandings among neighbors and members of the Church, and it is often the case that these little misunderstandings, arising among our brethren

and sisters, are brought before the teachers and perhaps before the Bishops for adjudication and reconciliation, but I think I will be safe in saying, and that the truth will verify the same, that within my knowledge and according to my best understanding, there never was, since I can remember, any less of these little misunderstandings and difficulties than exist to-day. Indeed I may say that misunderstandings have been far more pronounced in years that have gone by than they appear to be now.

I believe that there is a feeling of general contentment among the Latter-day Saints, and a feeling of satisfaction in their minds and in their hearts with reference to the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith and to the great divinity and atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In other words, I believe that the Latter-day Saints to-day are as devoted and fervent and firm in their convictions of the truth and in their knowledge of the truth, as they ever have been at any period of the Church's history from its beginning down to the present time. I believe that these statements can be seconded and vouched for by the presiding authorities of the Church throughout the length and breath of the land. We have these brethren here before us—presidents of stakes and their counselors, the bishops and their counselors, and the presidents of our various missions; and I am satisfied that they will, one and all, verify the statements that I have made with reference to the present condition of the Church.

Not only is this so, but I believe that the time has never been when the financial or temporal condition of the Latter-day Saints was better and more encouraging than at the present time. I believe that our people are generally prosperous, and I am satisfied that there is still greater prosperity in store for them through their continued faithfulness before the Lord. I believe that the Lord will bless the earth for their sake, that He will temper the elements for their good, that He will prosper them in the labor of their hands and in the thoughts of their minds; that He will guide them by the power of His Spirit into all truth and into the possession of those temporal blessings that are so needed to make a people happy, contented, and blessed in the land. With reference to this matter I desire to say that we have, I believe, a very correct criterion by which to judge the spiritual and temporal condition of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The records of the Church will show at the closing of the accounts for the past year that the tithing and the offerings of the Latter-day Saints have been a little above what would be called the average. We have had one or two more prosperous years in the past, judging by this criterion, but last year was a little above the average, notwithstanding the fact that during the last few years our people in many parts of the country have been suffering from a protracted drouth, in which they have come short in their crops, in which they have suffered materially in their flocks and in their herds; and in many places the drouth has been so severe that the people have been under the necessity of hiring or borrowing means with which to secure for themselves grain for seed for this present year. I want to say to you, my brethren and sisters, and those who preside over the Church, that it is a matter of pride and of satisfaction to my mind that the Church is in a condition to assist those who are in need of this kind of assistance, and we have done so. If anyone should feel dissatisfied

with the Trustee-in-Trust and his counselors and associates in the matter of extending aid to the Latter-day Saints in such matter of extremity as this, they know where to make their complaints, and I should be glad to meet them and consider the question. We wish it distinctly understood that while the Lord preserves us in the positions to which we have been called, the positions which we did not seek, but which, by the providence of God have been brought upon us, we will hold ourselves responsible before God and before His people to render material and financial aid to the people of God in every direction where we feel that it is necessary to do so. Our people in the south have been unfortunate in that barren country, in having their dams washed away by floods. For a long series of years they have had drouth, the earth has become parched and dry, and when the late rains and floods came they washed away some of their dams, and the people sent up their cries to us for help and we have helped them, and we thank God that we are in a position to help them, and so far as I am concerned I would be pleased if I could know that every dollar of the tithing that I pay to the Church is only employed in some good work of this kind by which the people of God are strengthened in building up Zion, in establishing their settlements and in "holding the fort," if you please.

In addition to this I am happy to say to this congregation and to all the world so far as my words may go, that we have taken the liberty to render aid to many of our missions abroad in the purchase and in the establishment of mission headquarters and the building of churches in which they can meet to worship God, and in which they will not be ashamed to invite the stranger to come and join with them. We have used the tithings of the people for this purpose, and we think that when the Church desires to call us to an account for matters of this kind there is a way by which it can be reached which will not occasion any noise or any confusion, and I trust without any misunderstanding whatever. I believe we can come to a perfect understanding with reference to these matters. We have been able, also, to purchase quite a tract of land in Jackson county adjacent to the site that was chosen by the Prophet Joseph Smith for a temple, to be built some day; and a few of our people have generously contributed for the accomplishment of this purpose, but the most of the means that have been employed for the accomplishment of this purpose have necessarily been taken from the general tithing funds of the Church. By this means we have been able to secure elegant headquarters for our mission or for our people in the Northern States mission; we have been able to assist the Southern States mission to obtain headquarters; and we have also been enabled to assist the British mission to obtain a comfortable home and headquarters, where the STAR that has been published for so many years can continue to be published for the advancement of the work of the Latter-day Saints and of the Elders in the British mission. We have been able also to assist largely in the erection of commodious houses of worship in Copenhagen, Denmark, in Christiania, Norway, and in Stockholm, Sweden; and we have assisted also in obtaining headquarters for our people who live upon many islands of the sea; and we have secured a tract of land upon the island of Samoa for the purpose of gathering our Saints where they can receive the benefits of Church organization, the benefits of Sunday schools,

Mutual Improvement associations and Sabbath worship, and where they can be taught the arts of industry and self-support. We have assisted our people in Australia and New Zealand in a similar way; and withal, we have met more than one-half of the bonded indebtedness of the Church, and we are in a condition, when the time shall be ripe for it, provided the Saints continue to meet their obligations in their tithes and offerings, to pay off the remaining portion of the Church indebtedness; when I trust by the blessings of the Almighty that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will see a day in which it will be absolutely free from debt and under obligation to no man. It will not be long before this consummation is realized if we continue our work in the future as we have done in the past.

Now, my brethren and sisters, it is not my purpose to continue my remarks very long. I desire cursorily to refer to these matters of which I have spoken, and it just occurs to my mind that in addition to the few things I have named—and I have not named them all—that it would be very proper for me to state that the Church, with a very small assistance from the estate of Dr. William H. Groves, has been able to erect a first-class, well appointed hospital in this city, fire-proof in every way, and equal to the best that can probably be found in any part of the world. We have been found fault with for this, that is to say, we have been charged with (hesitating)—pardon me if I do not mention that. It is too small a matter. However, we have cranks, you know, among the Latter-day Saints as well as among the people of the world; and every once in a while you come across an individual who is all one-sided, who can only see out of one eye, and out of a very small corner of the one eye, too, who is not capable of comprehending more than one thing at a time, who selects a certain little hobby—a certain little idea, a single thought, and straddles that idea and that single thought and commences to ride, and it is impossible to unhorse him from his hobby, because his mind is not capable of grasping more than that one little thought. We have such individuals as that, and it was from one of these individuals, one of these cranks, that we obtained or received not long ago solemn objections to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints putting in these means or tithing into a hospital. It was wicked and wrong to build hospitals, according to his ideas. Well, we will let such people go for what they are worth, and they are scarcely worth noticing, and I feel that I should not have noticed it at all; but we have such individuals among us more or less. We have a variety every once in a while, of creatures rising up amongst us, who are filled with the spirit of evil and hatred towards the truth and the people of God. It is only natural that this should be so.

It has occured to me somewhat in this way, that the body of the Church is likened to the body of a man, and you know men do sometimes get their systems a little deranged—that is to say, sometimes they are flea-bitten. Fleas bite them and mosquitoes bite them and cause little swellings to raise on their faces and hands. Sometimes they have boils upon them, and carbuncles and other excressences, that only need the application of the lance to let out the humor from them or to excise them from the body or cut them off and let them go, so that the body may be cleansed from their poisonous effects. It is so with the Church from time to time. There are these

characters who become a law unto themselves and they follow the trend of their own sweet wills until they get themselves into a condition mentally and spiritually so that they become a menace to the body ecclesiastic. In other words, they become like a boil or carbuncle on the body, and you have to call in the surgeon to apply the knife to cut them out, that the body may be cleansed from them, and this has been the case from the beginning.

From time to time these conditions arise and we have them to meet, and they will continue to arise from time to time in the future, and we shall have them to meet, but they will never amount to more than a pimple or a little sore on the body outside, and no one need to be alarmed at all for the consequences. Zion is established in the midst of the earth to remain. It is God Almighty's work, which He Himself, by His own wisdom, and not by the wisdom of man, has restored to the earth in the latter days, and He has established it here upon principles of truth and righteousness and purity and of revelation from God. It can no more be thrown down or left to another people, so long as the majority of the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will abide in their covenants with the Lord and will keep themselves pure and unspotted from the world, as all members of the Church should keep themselves. Then it will be as God has decreed, perpetual and eternal, until His will is accomplished and His purposes fulfilled in the earth among the children of men. This people can never flourish unless they abide in God's truth. There is nothing—no individuality, no combined influence among men that can prevail over the truth. The truth is mighty and it will prevail. It may be slow in the consummation of its purpose, in the accomplishment of the work that it has to do, but it is and will be sure, for the truth cannot fail and will not fail, for the Lord Almighty is behind it and does His work, and He will see to it that it is accomplished. The kingdom is the Lord's and the Lord is capable of taking care of it, and I want to say to you that there never was a time since the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when a man led the Church, not for one moment.

It was not so in the days of Joseph; it was not so in the days of Brigham Young; it has not been so since; it will never be so. The direction of this work among the people of the world will never be left to men. It is God's work, let me tell you, and I hope you will put it down in your memoranda, and do not forget it; that it is the Almighty that is going to do this work and consummate it, and not man. No man shall have the honor for doing it, nor has any man ever had the power to do it through himself. It is God's work. If it had been the work of man it would be like the things of the world; it would not have stood; and it would not have been true that God had chosen us out of the world, but we would be a part of it and "Hail fellow, well met" with it, but it is true that God has chosen us out of the world; therefore we are not of it; and therefore they hate us and therefore they will fight us and say all manner of evil against us falsely. They have always done so from the beginning, and they will continue to seek the destruction of the Latter-day Saints, and they will continue to feel in the future as they have felt in the past, and don't forget it, my brethren and sisters. When you go home, if you have not been in the habit of doing it or if you have neglected

your duty, when you go home to-day or to your homes in distant settlements, carry this injunction with you. Go into your secret chambers—go into your prayer rooms and there by yourselves or with your families gathered around you, bow your knees before God Almighty in praise and in thanksgiving to Him and for His merciful providence that has been over you and over all His people from the inception of this work down to the present time. Remember that it is the gift of God to man, that it is His power and His guiding influence that has accomplished what has been accomplished, and what has been done. It has not been done by the wisdom of men. It is proper we should give honor to those who have at heart the work of God and have been instrumental in bringing to pass much righteousness. They are instruments in God's hand, and we should not forget that they are such instruments, and we should honor them, but when we undertake to give them the honor for accomplishing this work and take the honor from God, who qualified the men to do the work, we are doing an injustice to God, and we are robbing Him of the honor that rightfully belongs to Him and giving it to men who are only instrumental in the hands of God in accomplishing His purposes.

Now may the Lord bless you, my brothers and sisters, and keep you in His holy keeping. But let me say, referring again to the last remarks, when you go home see to it that you observe this duty that devolves upon all members of the Church, to go before the Lord in prayer, then when you rise up in the morning, before you go out into the world to engage in your daily avocations, bow your knee before Almighty God with a heart full of gratitude and with thankful spirits before Him and unto Him for His mercy, which endureth forever, and for His loving kindness not only to us as individuals, but to the whole people and to the whole people of our great nation. The Lord has blessed the people of our nation. The Lord has given to them the choicest of all lands upon the face of the earth, and He has made them a great and a free people, and He has blessed them with wealth and with power, not only in our own land, but power among the nations of the world. The Lord Almighty has made these people great, and they will continue deserving this greatness and He will magnify them so long as the people of the nation will observe honest laws, virtue, purity of life, and equality, and justice to be meted out to all men.

I feel proud of the nation of which we are a part, because I am convinced in my own mind that there is not another nation upon the face of the globe where the Lord Almighty could have established His Church with so little difficulty and opposition as He has done in these United States. This was a free country, and religious toleration was the sentiment of the people of the land. It was an asylum for the oppressed. All the people of the world have been invited here to make homes of freedom for themselves, and under these circumstances the Lord was able to establish His Church, and has been able to maintain it and preserve it up to this time, until it has grown and spread, until it has become respectable—not only by its numbers, not only by the few years of age that it possesses, but respectable because of its intelligence, respectable because of its honesty, its purity, union, and industry, and for all its virtues. It has become respectable before those who are intelligent enough to come and see and understand the truth for themselves. It is true there are

those in the world who are so prejudiced and darkened in their minds that they will not see. They close their ears and will not hear, though the truth is spoken unto them, and they shut their eyes so that they cannot see, and close their hearts that they may not understand. Though you declare unto them the truth, they will deny it and reject it. We cannot help this. God will deal with them in His own time and in His own way, and we only need to do our duty, keep the faith ourselves, to work righteousness in the world ourselves, and leave the results in the hands of Him who overruleth all things for the good of those who obey Him and keep His commandments.

Now may peace be and abide in your hearts. May the union that has hitherto characterized our associations continue among us. May our people continue in their love for the truth and in their love for one another. May they continue in their honesty of purpose, in their uprightness, in their industry, in the spirit of non-complaint and in the spirit of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God for the blessings that we receive, the blessings of the earth, the blessings of the Spirit of the Lord that is given to us. And now I hope that we will continue during the sessions of this conference to have a good attendance, and that we may have the peaceable spirit of love unfeigned in our hearts, one for another, joy inexpressible for the opportunity we have of meeting together in this house that has been built for this purpose and to attend to the duties that devolve upon us as members of the Church, and that we may go hence at the close of this conference, strengthened in the faith, with courage in our good endeavors and with a renewed determination that as for us and for ours we will serve God and let the world do its worst. May God bless you is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen."

Quench not the Spirit.—"Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesyings." (I Thess. v: 19-20.)

If these words of Paul could be written in every book and every newspaper, put up before men's eyes all over the world, if they could be read intelligently, they would do a splendid work in hurrying along the development of backward, slow humanity.

Every man who has a plan to help his fellows knows what it is to have his spirit quenched. Every man who has been able to look into the future to see better conditions and to urge their realization, knows how much humanity is in need of the command—"Despise not prophesyings."

The first men that talked against slavery had their spirits quenched, with a vengeance. They were beaten and jailed. Their prophesyings were thoroughly despised. But slavery is gone.

The first men that talked against superstition, that denounced brutality masquerading in any garb, knew what it was to have the spirit quenched. In their case it was quenched very often with fire.

Every man who has been capable of seeing the world's future development and who has told about it in advance has been persecuted for his pains. In the old days he was persecuted vigorously with sticks and stones, imprisonment, the rack, or fire.

To-day the attacks upon him take the form of ridicule—often as effective in quenching the spirit as the old-fashioned methods.—*Los Angeles Examiner*

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 1905.

EDITORIAL.

THE REIGN OF THE IMPERSONAL.

We live in an age when the reality of all vital things are doubted and questioned. The men who are supposed to be wise in the learning of the schools philosophize into nonentity all things both in heaven and on the earth. They would have us believe that the real is not the permanent; that back of all materiality there is a something which is called "spiritual"; that in the end this "spiritual" and this material are separated, and that the former will exist apart from the latter—the kernal without a shell, the spirit without a body, thought without a mind.

In fact, God, man, and the devil have been reasoned out of existence—and yet we wonder at the unbelief in the world. The learned divines of the day who have robbed God and all His works of their glorious personality may lament over the infidelity of the age, but it might be well for them to consider for a moment how much of that infidelity is due to the teaching which they have given to the world regarding the nature of the Creator and His relationship to all His works.

It is only fair to say that there is much variation in opinion among religious teachers regarding the personality of God; but the over-learned, those who claim to have delved deeply into the mysteries of the kingdom usually teach that God is "without body, parts, or passions." The following definition, recently given by a very learned London preacher, will fairly illustrate the manner in which the Supreme Being is disrobed and disembodied

"*Verax*, commenting upon the text, 'God is a Spirit,' asks me to say, for the benefit of a local preacher, what would be the best way to make the idea of God intelligible to a rural audience. He is inclined to the belief that his hearers think of God as a distant personality with human attributes, Who can be reached by the prayers of the faithful, but who is, as it were, external to their ordinary experience.——The true rendering of the text is 'God is Spirit.' Of course all ideas about God must be more or less anthropomorphic, that is, we are compelled to think of Him in the terms of our own experience of what is true and good. We cannot form a helpful idea of the goodness of God except as we read it in the goodness of man. The character of Jesus is, therefore, the norm for Divine and human perfection. But God cannot be

personal as we understand personality. Personality at once implies limitation; it indicates that there is something outside itself. The Being of God must be supra-personal. It would, therefore, be best to lead your hearers to think of Him as the ever present Spirit of love, truth, holiness, joy, peace and power. Remind them that the truest and deepest self within every one of them is God. He is the source of human sympathy, and of all mutual solicitude and tenderness. We can only care for one another because of the God within us."

Having thus got rid of the bodily form and personality of God the Eternal Father, the next in order would be to do away in like manner with "the prince of the power of the air," Satan, the father of lies; and this the "ever learning" philosophers of the day have done by saying that the devil is but a personification of the principle of evil, just as God is a personification of the principle of good. The works of evil are no longer traced to the power and influence of the devil—that being who in the Scriptures figures so conspicuously as a personal enemy to God and all righteousness—but the evil in the world is accounted for by the workings of heredity, and the influence of society and environment.

The next step in this doctrine of destruction is to do away with the personality of man. As this cannot possibly be done while man lives here in mortality, the annihilating process is reserved until such time when the spirit shall be set free from the earthly body. Then, it is taught, there is a general blending of all "souls" into a mysterious oneness that robs man of that most priceless gift, his individuality.

The truth is always plain and simple. When all these vain philosophies and bewildering speculations are stripped away, the truth stands out clearly and easily to be understood. God is a personal, spiritual being, having a body the same in form and figure as that which He has provided for the human family, His children. Because God is spiritual, does not mean that He is immaterial. The arguments to demonstrate these truths have often been given, and are so well known to the Latter-day Saints that they need not be given here.

Satan also is a personal being, though without a body of flesh and bones. In the Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses, chapter 4, it is recorded that "the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan . . . was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying, Behold—I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me thine honor. But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also that I should give unto him my own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down; and he become Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice."

This person having been cast out of heaven with the many that followed after him, came to earth, and we soon find them at their work of destruction.

Satan began it in the Garden of Eden. We are told in the Pearl of Great Price (pages 4 and 5) that Moses had a personal encounter with him, wherein Moses rebuked him by the power of the Only Begotten, "And it came to pass that Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, gnashing of teeth." In the Book of Job we read that "there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

Evil is manifested through personality. In the abstract it cannot exist. There must be something to be red in order to have redness. Hardness cannot be without substance. Moral principles detached from individuals have no existence. Sin is an individual act of an intelligent, morally responsible person, therefore, when the adversary of men's souls is called a mere figure of speech to indicate the principle of evil, that adversary has once more slyly done his work; for if men do not believe in the reality of Satan, they will not be on their guard against him, and there will be no incentive to fight against a personal foe.

As regards the continued personality of the spirit after the death of the body, reason and revelation assure us of its truth. This theme is a large one, and can but be touched upon here. As sure as there is an existence after death, that existence must be a personal one. We know of none other, and none other is conceivable. Test this truth by Christ, our Elder Brother. We know that He existed as an intelligent personality before He tabernacled in the flesh. We also know that as such He continued even when His mortal body lay in the tomb, because we read that He, "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison." (I Peter iii: 18, 19).

The reign of the impersonal is a usurpation of falsehood over truth. The idea of personality permeates the whole Gospel plan. The development of the soul lies along the path of individuality. The attributes of God our Father lie within the human soul, and we grow in perfectness when these are brought out, developed and emphasized; when each soul, differentiated from every other soul, is yet in harmony with all the good, the noble, and the true that is in all. When salvation and exaltation are assured to a human soul, it will stand perfectly individualized, yet one with God in all His divine purposes.

"In the beginning," it is said, the earth "was without form and void"; but when it has filled the measure of its creation and it is quickened and sanctified by the power of the celestial kingdom, it will be one more orb in the galaxy of God's heaven, beautiful, glorified, shining with the radiant light which the Lord God shall give it.

N. A.

THE following donations have been received for the Joseph and Hyrum Smith Memorial Fund: From the Bristol conference, 2s 6d; from Birmingham, 2s; from London, 2s 6d; from Grimsby, 1s.

THERE is now at this office a large supply of missionary's Individual

Record books, ruled on good paper and bound in limp leather, price 1s; also daily report blanks in pads of 60, at 4d. These books were printed to supply the demand created by the decisions of the conference Presidents' Convention held on the first of the year.

Releases.—Elders Cecil Woodward, J. George Barrett, and William Preston of the Leeds conference are honorably released to return home per s.s. *Arabic*, May 12th, 1905.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

Success at Swadlincote.—Elders George W. Wright and George Reed, writing from Swadlincote, Nottingham conference, report a number of meetings and a social gathering at Swadlincote. This is a new branch, and the Saints are rejoicing in the newly found truth. Many friends are interested in the Gospel, and prospects are bright for much good in the future.

Sociable at Stockport.—The Stockport branch gave a very successful sociable on the evening of Saturday, April 22nd. About seventy-five people attended, and a good impression was made on the friends and investigators who were present. The visiting Elders felt so good that they went out into the street and held a rousing open-air meeting while the preparations were being made for the sociable.

Progress at Barrow-in-Furness.—Elders Isaac Langton, Jr., and Daniel C. Rich, writing from Barrow-in-Furness, under date of April 30, 1905, say:

"Thinking that perhaps it would be interesting to some of the readers of the STAR to know how the work of the Lord is progressing in Barrow, of the Liverpool conference, we take pleasure in reporting that on April 25th, 1905, three honest souls were added to the Church by baptism, Elder Daniel C. Rich officiating in the ordinance. This makes seventeen who have accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ and received a testimony of its truth during the last year.

"This latest baptism was attended by an old sister, Mary Gregson, who was baptized in the river Ribble, at Preston, sixty-six years ago. She was personally acquainted with President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, and many other Elders of those early days. She was lost track of for thirty years, during which time she attended numerous places of worship, but failed to find one that would give satisfaction to her heart. She is overjoyed to be in communication again with God's Saints, and her testimony is a source of strength to all who know her.

"The prospects for the future are very bright. President Brinton frequently visits us, which always awakens new interest and brings strangers to the meetings.

"There was a large branch of the Church here thirty-five years ago, and we have had the pleasure of talking with some who attended the meetings in those days. Since then there have been no Elders stationed here, although some have passed through occasionally and held street meetings, sowing seeds

which have taken root in the hearts of many, some of which we have had the opportunity of 'watering,' and which we have reason to hope will some day bear fruit."

"The branch was re-opened about two years ago, but no meetings were held until February, 1904. Since then the work has progressed very rapidly, much prejudice having been allayed. We have friends on every side who make us welcome at their homes, and who listen attentively to the message we have to bear. Several cases of healing have taken place which are testimonies to many that the power of God is with His servants. We are greatly encouraged in our labors, and feel thankful to our Heavenly Father for His blessings on our work."

THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE.

THE semi-annual Birmingham conference was held in the Handsworth Assembly Rooms, Wretham Road, Handsworth, Sunday, April 30th, 1905.

The three services were well attended, and a spirit of brotherly love was manifest among the Saints and our visiting friends. There were present President Heber J. Grant of the European mission; President William W. Phelps and thirteen Elders of the Birmingham conference; Sister Grant and Sister Arvilla Clark. The visit of Sister Clark was much appreciated, she having made a special trip from London to attend our conference and favor us by singing at each of the services.

At the morning session, after the usual preliminary exercises, President Phelps welcomed the Saints and our friends to the conference, and briefly gave an account of the work being done. He presented the general and local authorities, who were unanimously sustained. Sister Winifred Greetham sang, "The Holy City." Elder William J. Yard spoke on baptism. The hymn, "'Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaint," was sung by Sister Arvilla Clark.

President Grant occupied the remainder of the time. Said he was pleased to meet the Saints of the Birmingham conference, and exorted them to live up to the principles of the Gospel. He gave some practical illustrations of how the Saints will be rewarded according to the work they perform.

In the afternoon Elder William A. Bennett bore a faithful testimony to the restoration of the Gospel. Sister Alice Kirby sang a solo, "The Lost Chord." Elder Arthur Robinson spoke on obedience. Sister Arvilla Clark sang, "O My Father."

President Grant spoke of the great missionary work being done by the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of the many obstacles they had to overcome, of leaving their homes and loved ones for the love of the Gospel, without hope of any earthly reward. Recited many instances in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith to prove the divinity of the Latter-day work.

At the evening meeting Sister Arvilla Clark sang a solo entitled, "Calvary." Elders Benjamin Willmore, John W. Robertson, Frank W. Brazier, David Andrew, and President Phelps spoke briefly on Gospel principles, and bore their testimonies to the truth.

President Grant then spoke on the universal apostacy of the primitive Christian church, the divine commission given to the apostles of Jesus Christ, and the necessity of divine authority to preach the Gospel. Said the Latter-day Saints lived a practical religion, and enjoyed the blessings promised by the Savior. The Gospel tree was still alive in the Church to-day, and its fruits are visible in the homes of the Latter-day Saints.

President Grant met with the Elders on Saturday evening, and gave them some valuable instructions.

FRANK W. BRAZIER, Clerk of Conference.

LETTERS FROM SALT LAKE CITY.

ENCOURAGING NEWS FROM CHURCH HEADQUARTERS.

WE are permitted to make the following extracts from a letter to President Grant from the First Presidency, dated Salt Lake City, April 13, 1905:

"We have just concluded a most delightful conference; decidedly the largest, and by many esteemed the best they ever attended. There was a sweet, zealous, united spirit manifest throughout, and the voting for the authorities was an inspiration. The uplifting of the hands of the Saints to sustain their file leaders was no perfunctory performance, but was done so heartily and vigorously, and withal with such unanimity that it must have been a very depressing object lesson to those who claim that 'Mormonism' is going to pieces, and that the members of the Church are split up into opposing factions, a statement which, by the way, they do not themselves believe. The work of the Lord, through His grace and blessing, was never more firmly established nor more deeply rooted in the hearts of the Saints than it is to-day. Nor are the few malcontents, that are making such a noise in this city, accomplishing even with outsiders what they anticipated. To hear the constant suggestive enquiry, 'What is the matter with Salt Lake City,' one not acquainted with existing conditions might imagine something very terrible was the matter with it, while the truth is, that though for various causes business in some lines is dull, in others it is better than last year, with bright prospects for the immediate future.

"There were only five of the Twelve present at our conference until the last meeting, when Brother John Henry Smith reached us from his lengthy trip in Southern Mexico. We were very pleased to notice the great improvement in his appearance, and his evident return to robust health. We regret that Elder M. W. Merrill's condition did not permit him to be present with us to share the good things said and done at conference. Our own health is excellent, and so is that of all the general authorities who are at home, with the exception of Bishop William B. Preston, who is not well, and on whom the increasing years seem to bear heavily.

"We are having a delightful spring, and prospects generally for good crops are very promising. Particularly in Utah's Dixie are the people encouraged by the unusual abundance of rain that has fallen.

"Bishop Louis G. Hoagland, of the 26th Ward, Salt Lake City, has been appointed to succeed Elder C. B. Bartlett in the presidency of the New Zea-

land mission. Bishop Hoagland has filled one excellent mission to those lands and loves the Maori people. He expects to sail next month.

"The company of missionaries that leaves for Europe next week now numbers forty-five brethren and one sister. Among the former are four sons of President Joseph F. Smith."

Through the kindness of President Henry M. O'Gorman, of the Liverpool branch, we are also permitted to make the following extracts from a letter received by him from Elder Alexander Buchanan, Jr., formerly of the Liverpool office. The letter is dated at Salt Lake City, April 13, 1905:

"Conference has come and gone, and I can say truthfully that without a doubt it was the very best conference it has ever been my privilege to attend. The crowds were something remarkable, and the great Tabernacle was taxed beyond its capacity at every meeting. Sunday the throngs were simply enormous, every building on Tabernacle square being filled to overflowing, and hundreds, not to say thousands, were on the outside.

"It may be asked, 'What caused the crowd?' and the answer may be given, 'The assaults of the enemy.' Doubtless you are aware of the fight that has been going on here for some time past. The anti-'Mormon' element has been doing its utmost to disrupt, if possible, the work of God, but it has all been to no purpose. The old axiom, 'Truth is mighty and will prevail,' is still good, the work continues to prosper, and the Saints of God join in the hymn, 'All is Well.' In his remarks to the assembled Saints President Smith was at his best, and every word that fell from his lips bore on it the impress of inspiration. The same may be said of most of the other speakers. In fact, it applies to all whom I had the privilege of listening to. I am sure, had you been with us you would have been strongly impressed with the influence and magnitude of the Latter-day work. Such occasions forcibly remind us of the words of Gamaliel to those who persecuted Christ and His Apostles: 'If this work be of men it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.' To my mind this is a sufficient answer."

A MARVELOUS HEALING.

I FEEL it is my duty to relate to you the remarkable case of healing that took place at Lewiston, Utah, on March 4, of the present year, (1905). I was called to the bedside of my husband's sister, who was suffering intensely from la grippe and other complications, that caused her tongue to become paralyzed and her eyes blind, so that light could not be discerned from darkness, and her jaws were locked.

How diligently we worked, trying our best to unlock the jaw and ease the pain! At last we succeeded in opening her mouth. It was then we discovered that she could not speak, although she was perfectly conscious of all that was said or done in her presence.

Ofttimes we begged her to permit her husband to call in a physician, but as often she would feel for her husband's hand and shake her head, as if to say

No, and point to the Great Physician on high, giving us to understand that her faith was centered in Him.

We were very hopeful for her speedy recovery when her jaws were unlocked. But our hopes were only of short duration, for soon they locked again and remained so for thirty-five hours, causing her constant suffering.

At last a paroxysm of coughing came on. The expectoration from the lungs seemed as though it would surely choke her; death appeared to be, to all of us except her husband, very near. His faith was like adamant. He sent for two of his nearest neighbor brethren, Stake President William H. Lewis, and Elder Goudy Hogan. These brethren, together with her husband and her brother, J. R. Stoddard, of Richmond, her eldest daughter and three smaller children, Sister Mattie Harris Pond and myself knelt humbly around her bedside. President Lewis offered prayer in her behalf, after which the holy ordinance was administered, Elder Goudy Hogan anointing the head, jaws, and neck, President Lewis sealing the anointing. In earnest supplication he asked the Lord to open her eyes, unlock her jaws, and unloose the paralyzed tongue. As soon as the Amen was uttered, Sister Hendricks arose in her bed, leaned on her elbow, and with tears of joy asked the brethren to pray again and thank the Lord for restoring her sight and giving her utterance, for she was healed and was perfectly well.

So great was the thankfulness in the hearts of our brethren that they knelt again, and each in turn poured out his soul in gratitude to the Almighty for having answered their prayer in behalf of Sister Mary. Words are inadequate to describe how grateful her numerous friends and neighbors all are.

Sister Mary is the stake president of the Y. L. M. I. A. of Benson Stake, and is the wife of Elder B. A. Hendricks, of Lewiston, Cache Co., Utah.—FANNIE STODDARD, in the *Juvenile Instructor*.

CURRENT COMMENT.

Modern "Civilization."

THE Japanese Ambassador to France recently made this caustic comment on the modern world's estimate of what constitutes civilization; "We Japanese have for many generations sent to Europe exquisite lacquer work, delicately carved figures, beautiful embroidery; but the European nations described us as uncivilized. We have recently killed some seventy thousand Russians, and every nation in Europe is wondering at the high degree of civilization we have attained."

The Limit of Prejudice.

"THE limit of prejudice has been reached in the case of a medical student here," writes a correspondent to the *Deseret News* from New York, "who, though successfully and brilliantly passing stiff examinations since his entrance into the broad field of medicine, has been turned down, owing to the fact of his religion. For some time the student has worked with unusual success, and last week realized the fulfillment of his hard earned desires by being selected among the eight foremost graduates, whose markings stood highest, to a position on the board. Congratulations from professors and

fellow students were freely offered, all interested being conscious that he had justly merited the distinction. For a few days our young friend was a happy man. But envy crept in—and it is thought some of the students informed the professors of his religious beliefs. Be that as it may, the young man was summoned before the board, and very bluntly asked if he was a 'Mormon.' 'Yes,' was the ready reply. For a few moments there was a rather warm discussion between the three judges and the student, the result being that the principle speaker said: 'Dr. So and So, we find your record above reproach, and your markings the highest, but owing to the prejudice now existing against your people, it would be unwise to retain you on our staff.' He had been weighed and found—not wanting, but guilty of being a 'Mormon.'"

The Ridiculousness of the "Higher Criticism."

Emil Reich, a Hungarian writer, exposes in the *Contemporary Review*, the foolish arguments of the "higher" critics of the Bible in the following manner:

"Some of the latest samples of philological jugglery with which the public has been duped are too amusing to be omitted. If only read from the humorous standpoint, it is doubtful whether any book could afford a merrier half-hour than one of the latest achievements of Professor Hugo Winckler—two volumes in which he finally dissolves into myth the small portion of Jewish history which had been mercifully left to us. Listen a while, and you shall hear how Jewish tradition is a mere flimsy plagiarism, of Babylonian myths. Among the general massacre of Biblical personalities we can only mention a few of the victims. What person has hitherto been more historical than Joseph? But to Professor Winckler he is an obvious astral myth, for in the 43rd chapter of Genesis, verse 5, does he not come at noon? And is not this clear enough proof that he is a mere personification of the sun? Besides, if we are disposed to doubt, we must recollect that Joseph dreamed that the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him; and who should they bow down to save the sun? Joshua, too, is the sun. For he is the son of Nûn, and does not Nûn, being interpreted, mean fish? and does not the sun at the spring equinox issue from the constellation of *Pisces?* What could be more conclusive? Besides, does it not amply explain why Joshua's companion is Caleb? Now Caleb is Kaleb, and Kaleb is Kelb, and Kelb is a dog. So of course Caleb is clearly put for the dog-star Sirius."

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EDITED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HEBER J. GRANT, 10 HOLLY ROAD,
LIVERPOOL:
FOR SALE IN ALL THE CONFERENCES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN GREAT BRITAIN.